pharmaceutical composition can be administered at a dose of 0.1 μg/kg/min to 0.2 μg/kg/min, and is preferably administered in a dose of 0.025 μg/kg/min to 0.1 μg/kg/min, by the continuous intravenous route. When the administration is made by coronary infusion, a higher dose of the active ingredient can be administered than in the case of an intravenous administration.

In the Claims:

Please replace claims 1, 3, 6, and 8 with the following amended claims. A version of the claims reciting the revisions is attached herewith in Attachment B.

1. (Twice Amended) A pharmaceutical composition for use in treatment or prophylaxis of ischemic heart disease, the pharmaceutical composition comprising a substance, as an active ingredient, which can increase intracellular cyclic guanosine 3',5'-monophosphate (cGMP) production by acting on a natriuretic peptide receptor, and which has an effect of reducing an infarct region.

3. (Amended) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the ischemic heart disease is myocardial infarction.

6. (Amended) A method of treatment or prophylaxis of ischemic heart disease, comprising administering to a patient who is in need of such a treatment or prophylaxis a substance, as an active ingredient, which can increase intracellular cyclic guanosine 3',5'-monophosphate (cGMP) production by acting on a natriuretic peptide receptor, and which has an effect of reducing an infarct region, before the initiation of, during and/or following to ischemia reperfusion therapy.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the ischemic heart disease is myocardial infarction.--

Please add the following new claims 11-16:

--11. (Added) A method for reducing an infarct region or suppressing enlargement

of an infarct region in the heart of a patient who is suffering from or has a potential risk of suffering from infarct resulting from ischemic necrosis as an ischemia reperfusion injury, wherein said method comprises:

administering a substance capable of acting on a natriuretic peptide receptor to increase the production of cellular cyclic guanosine 3',5'-monophosphate (cGMP), at an amount effective for reducing the infarct region or suppressing enlargement of an infarct region to said patient before the initiation of, during and/or following ischemia reperfusion.--

--12. (Added) A method of claim 11, wherein the active ingredient is a natriuretic peptide selected from the group consisting of atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP), brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) and C-type natriuretic peptide (CNP).--

--13. (Added) A method of claim 12, wherein the active ingredient is administered at a dose between 0.01 μg/kg/ml and 0.2 μg/kg/ml by continuous infusion.--

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--14. (Added) A method of claim 13, wherein the active ingredient is administered at a dose between 0.025 μg/kg/ml and 0.1 μg/kg/ml.--

--15. (Added) A method of any one of claims 12, 13 and 14, wherein the infusion is made by an intravenous injection.--

--16. (Added) A method by any one of claims 12, 13 and 14, wherein the infusion is made by a coronary injection.--

Remarks

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-16 are pending in the application--claims 1, 3, 6, and 8 having been amended and claims 11-16 having been added.